

Council Meeting
January 16, 2007

The meeting was called to order by President Spaetti all councilmen, and Attorney Wetherill were present.

Minutes

Wetherill requested a change in the January 2, 2007 minutes. On the list of 2007 appointments, it was Winsett who seconded the motion for Wetherill to be the board attorney. Winsett made a motion to approve the minutes. Ebert seconded. All in favor.

Additional Appropriations

Probation User's Fee - Judge Roell requested \$27,588 from the Probation User's Fund for an additional probation officer. Ebert made a motion to approve the request. Kroeger seconded. All in favor.

Cum Cap Fund - Judge Roell and Clerk Jochim requested \$25,000 from the Cum Cap Fund for a new server and general computer upgrade. Kroeger made a motion to approve the request. Kress seconded. All in favor.

Clerk Perp - Clerk Jochim requested \$7,500 from the Clerk Perp fund for a new copier and 6 months of service costs. Ebert made the motion to approve. Winsett seconded. All in favor.

Jochim also asked the option of the council on whether she should invest her office funds at a fixed rate or a variable rate. Bunner made a motion the funds be invested at a fixed rate. Kress seconded. 6 votes for, with Ebert abstaining. The motion passes.

Health Department - Donna Etienne of the Health Department requested \$16,246 from the State Master Tobacco Settlement Fund for the purchase of Child Restraint Seats. Discussion was had as to why the money was not being used for programs to help people decrease their dependence on tobacco. Etienne stated there were several other programs in the area already available and the one the health department offered in the past was rarely used. Kroeger made the motion to approve the request. Ebert seconded. All in favor.

COIT - The commissioners sent requests for payments previously committed to for the Luce Township Regional Sewer District for \$150,000 and the Santa Claus Water project. for \$100,000. Kroeger made a motion to approve both. Bunner seconded. All in favor.

Ed Balbach, President of the Mariah Hill Regional Sewer District was present to discuss the request by the commissioners for \$15,000 each year for 5 years of COIT funds for the Mariah Hill Regional Sewer District. Balbach distributed a treasurer's report detailing the annual shortfall due to purchasing chemicals which were not included in the rate study when the project was being designed. Also, there was an unexpected cost of \$1,980 per year for an audit conducted every two years by the Indiana State Board of Accounts. Currently the average bill is \$78, and the district is very hesitant to raise the rates any higher. Kroeger stated he would be more comfortable with only a one year commitment, and told Balbach that before next year the district needs to look at how it can pay down the debt. Ebert made a motion to approve \$15,000 of COIT funds. Bunner seconded. All in favor.

Perdue read a statement discussing the proposed Public Safety Building, the FEMA grant process and the process of holding public hearings to discuss the project. Commissioner Attorney Lueken further discussed the grant process. Lueken stated that by just applying for this grant it does not obligate the county to accept the funds or build the building. The bills currently submitted are \$2,500 for the soil testing and \$3,500 for the grant writing done by Indiana 15. Lueken stated that the bill for Universal is not submitted but will exceed \$14,000. Kroeger made a motion to approve \$6,000 to pay for the soil testing and work done by Indiana 15, and wait on approving funds for Universal until an itemized bill can be submitted. Ebert seconded. All in favor. Lueken presented a Resolution committing local funds for the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant with the cost not to exceed \$1.9 million to \$2.6 million, as required for the grant application. The difference in the cost to the county depends on how FEMA will calculate the county matching funds. Spaetti asked if the council still has the final say on if the money is appropriated in the end. Lueken said FEMA will not give the county any money if there is not a local match. Ebert stated that right now we are trying to see if we will even get the grant, then the council will decide how much money will be spent. Winsett stated he is not against the building, but he has concerns over the amount of square footage. He is worried that the county is spending potentially \$2.6 million to save only \$30,000 a year in rent. Ebert stated the county needs to get the emergency management equipment centrally located and accessible. Kroeger made a motion to sign Resolution #2007-02 Committing Local Funds. Ebert seconded. Vote 6 to 1 with Winsett opposed. The motion passes.

Riverboat – Lueken discussed the SOB hearings and a request by the Commissioners for \$40,000 of Riverboat funds for legal services. Lueken, Wetherill, and Bergthold estimated that \$30,000 should cover the bills to come with \$9,000 in bills currently due. Winsett made a motion to approve \$12,000. Bunner seconded. All in favor. Lueken asked for clarification that since the council did not approve the additional money, that it is not an indication of the council's commitment to seeing this issue through. Spaetti stated no, the council just prefers to see the bills before appropriating the money.

VOCA – Prosecutor Dartt and Victims Advocate Becky Kramer requested \$6,000 out of the Pre-trial Diversion Fund to receive the matching grant of \$20,000 to pay the salary of the Victims Advocate. Dartt stated that the county is required by statute to provide victims services. Spaetti asked Kramer what kind of crimes she deals with. Kramer stated she works with all victims, whether petty theft or a murder case. She notifies them of any court proceedings, and will go to court with them. She also goes over plea agreements with them and makes sure their wishes are known. Bunner made a motion to approve the request. Ebert seconded. All in favor.

COIT Bond – Commissioners requested the 5th of 7 payments on the County Garage. Kroeger made a motion to approve. Kress seconded. All in favor.

COIT – Commissioners requested the money previously approved for the Grandview Water Project. Gogel made the motion to approve. Ebert seconded. All in favor.

LEPC

Perdue presented the board with a copy of the Local Emergency Planning Committee spending plan, which was approved by the LEPC on November 20, 2007. The LEPC is a state entity which is ran by county officials.

Luce Township Regional Sewer District

LTRSD Attorney Robinson stated the board is here to ask for help. In December of 2000 the county authorized a study that showed the need for the sewer system in Luce Township. The system is designed; the only hold up is that they have only 50% of the easements signed. LTRSD board is asking the Council to sign a resolution encouraging the residents of Luce Township to get their easements in. The immediate problem is that improvements to the Luce Elementary School have already been delayed. Superintendent Mike Robinson stated that the school board has planned for the last 5 or 6 years to renovate the elementary schools. The project has been delayed due to the problems with the current septic system. The long range problem is the declining enrollment in the elementary school and the declining population. There is a concern about putting an investment into a school when there is no infrastructure to support new homes or home sales to at least keep the population steady or increasing. He made an appeal to the council to approve the resolution and encourage the people of Luce Township to sign their easement to help insure the future of the school. Kroeger asked what the current status is of the renovation of Luce Elementary. Superintendent Robinson stated it was on hold. Kroeger asked what the current status is on the Luce sewer. Attorney Robinson stated it cannot go forward until the easements are in; the USDA requires close to 100% of the easements be signed. LTRSD board member Wayne Bond presented the board with a letter and proposal he says will solve the problems for the school immediately. His suggestion is a local sewer system, such as the Algae Wheel system. He estimates it will cost approximately \$1000 less per customer and have an average monthly bill of \$40. Winsett asked the others representing the LTRSD why this system would not work. LTRSD Vice President Jim Stevenson said all of these systems have been researched and more times than not in the long run the systems fail. Winsett stated he has tried to find a community that is using the grinder system and he has not been able to find one. Commonwealth Engineer Richard Farmer said he was involved in putting in a system in Huntingburg over 6 years ago. LTRSD board member Packer said she has looked into the localized systems and they are ok, but it is not the best. If USDA is going to help the district get the average bill to be \$65 as long as the system is an approved system, why not try to get the one that is cleaner and more efficient. Spaetti stated that at the February 20th meeting the LTRSD board should attend so this can be discussed and a solution can be found. Wetherill stated the audit should be in by then so everything can be out in the open. The LTRSD board supports the audit. Kroeger stated that communication is the major problem. Kroeger would also like to have copies of the financials and itemized statements back through 2004. Gogel suggested that getting together with the board and other interested people outside of the regularly scheduled meeting might work better. Kroeger asked of the people who are opposed if there can be a reasonable resolution. A LTRSD board member stated that when he joined the board he noted that so many people were asking such detailed questions and demanding answers, he asked them to write them down and they would give them to the engineers or the attorney for answers. He stated a lot of time and money has gone into answering all of the questions. Bill Tinsley of the Luce Township Remonstrance Committee stated that his group is not trying to stop this project. He stated the board has refused to listen to the alternatives. He said at an open meeting with the community it was asked that if a system could be put in with a bill for \$65 a month would they want it, and all said no. Spaetti asked Stevenson if a new home was built or upgraded if their system would be given a grace period before they were required to hook on. Attorney Robinson stated that according to Indiana Statute, if

you have built within a period of time before the sewer system was installed the home owner is given a discount on their sewer bill.

Winsett made a motion to adjourn. Bunner seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm.

County Council,

_____ President	_____
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_____ Attest:	_____
_____ Cindy Shelton, Auditor	_____
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